



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the West Charlotte Recreation Center, located 2401 Kendall Drive, Charlotte, NC on Thursday, November 9, 2017 at 6 p.m.

PRC MINUTES November 9, 2017

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present:

Elaine Powell, Chair
 Heidi Pruess – Vice Chair
 Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary
 Sterling Martin
 Brian Cox
 Peter Engels
 John Leonard
 Blanche Penn
 Mary Foxx Johnson

PRC Absent:

Northern Towns – Vacant Position
 Marc Seelinger
 Doug Burnett
 Rick Winiker

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Powell welcomed all to the November 9, 2017 Park and Recreation Commission meeting. All commissioners introduced themselves, shared the region they represented and the advisory councils on which they serve.

Terri Stowers, Division Director of Community and Recreation Center Services, welcomed the PRC to the newly renovated West Charlotte Recreation Center and encouraged all to tour the facility following the meeting. Terri then introduced the facility manager, Charles Young, who introduced West Charlotte Recreation Center staff.

Proclamations, Awards and Recognitions

James R. Garges – Retirement Recognition: Deputy Director, Michael Kirschman, presented Director Jim Garges with a crystal award and commemorative glass bowl in recognition of his retirement. Many kind words were expressed regarding Jim's leadership and accomplishments over the past 10 years. Jim will be missed by the County and the entire community. Jim will be moving to Nashville, TN.

Public Appearance:

The following citizens appeared before the Park and Recreation Commission to express concerns or share information as noted:

Shawn Mumford: Mr. Mumford requested that the Department provide more opportunities in our programming for music and music training for youth. Mr. Mumford shared that his son plays more than 50 instruments and they are very interested in sharing that talent with other youth.

Diane Parks: Ms. Parks attended West Charlotte H.S. and currently participates in the West Charlotte Recreation Center Nutrition Program. Ms. Parks requested the following from the Department:

- Computers, computer training for seniors at W. Charlotte Recreation Center
- More trips for seniors
- Trips beyond the 60-mile radius (requires a charter bus per Terri Stowers)
- Wi-Fi at W. Charlotte Recreation Center
- Security cameras at W. Charlotte Recreation Center
- More entertainment during the day
- Arts and Science programs

Maureen Gilewski: Ms. Gilewski, Chair of the Eastland Area Strategies Team (E.A.S.T.), came before the Park and Recreation Commission to share the focus of E.A.S.T, a volunteer board established to work toward the recommended goals of the Eastland Area Plan and to improve the future and quality of life for the people of Charlotte East through economic development. The current priority is on redevelopment of the Eastland property and the east-west connection to the Carolina Thread Trail. This trail will cross Campbell Creek and go under Albemarle Road, a complicated project that will include City, County and State. E.A.S.T. has presented their priorities to the Greenway Advisory Council as well as the City and County managers to make sure everyone is aware of the focus.

Alberenthious Stover: Ms. Stover came before the PRC to inquire about the Sr. Advisory committee for District 8. Terri advised they will be reinstated. Ms. Stover expressed interested in serving.

Sally Carter: Ms. Carter came before the PRC to express opposition to the \$5.00 van fee charged to seniors participating in senior trips.

Kate McClain: Ms. McClain came before the PRC to express opposition to the \$5.00 van fee charged to seniors participating in senior trips.

Yubonne Johnson: Ms. Johnson came before the PRC to express opposition to the \$5.00 van fee charged to seniors participating in senior trips.

Jacqueline Wright: Ms. Wright came before the PRC to express opposition to the \$5.00 van fee charged to seniors participating in senior trips.

Staff and Commissioners took time to address concerns regarding the \$5.00 van fee. Discussion resulted in the following information being shared:

- Trips beyond a 60-mile radius requires use of a Charter Bus
- The program fee of \$5.00 is part of the cost recovery policy and not part of the Fees and Charges
- The “On The Table” event discussed the issue of isolation for seniors. Fees that may keep seniors from participating in programs should be reviewed.
- The Department is considering scholarships for seniors
- Consider the Arts and Science Council Cultural Blocks opportunities

Staff Presentations:

Program Presentation – Park Operations:

Mecklenburg County Sportsplex at Matthews – Preston Buckman, Facility Manager

Preston Buckman made a presentation on the Sportsplex at Matthews. This presentation included an overview of the facility, operations, tournaments and events, the stadium and amenities, park and park amenities, staffing, maintenance, stadium expansion and future programming and branding. This presentation can be viewed here: [Sportsplex PRC Presentation](#)

Naming Application – Third Ward Park – James Dennis Rash Third Ward Neighborhood Park

Peter Cook, Division Director of Park Operations, came before the PRC to give notice of a naming application to name Third Ward Park the “James Dennis Rash Third Ward Neighborhood Park”. Once the application is complete and approved by the Central Advisory Council, the application will come back to the PRC for their endorsement before going to the BOCC for approval.

Recycling Opportunities

Peter Cook shared the processes in place in the Department to capture recyclables from remodeling and construction projects. For large projects, the contractor is asked to recycle as much as possible and to provide a list of those items. This request is included in the RFP, but there is no required percentage, but based on best practice to recycle what is feasible. For in-house projects, staff bring recyclables back to the AOB and deposit into the recycle bins. The Department has also worked with Habitat for Humanity when doing housing demolitions.

Chair Powell asked that all continue to be mindful of recycling opportunities.

Park and Recreation Commission Priorities - None

Advisory Council Appointments/Reappointments:

Cooperative Extension Advisory Council: **Motion was made** by Commissioner Pruess to appoint **Diane Podolsky** to an unexpired term on the Cooperative Extension Advisory Council, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Leonard and approved unanimously with Commissioner Penn abstaining from the vote.

North Advisory Council: **Motion was made** by Commissioner Martin to increase the membership of the North Advisory Council from 9 members to 10 members, which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved unanimously with Commissioner Penn abstaining from the vote.

Motion was made by Commissioner Martin to appoint **Kendel B. Phillips** to an unexpired term on the North Advisory Council, expiring 6/2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved unanimously with Commissioner Penn abstaining from the vote.

Commissioner Penn, as a new member, inquired about orientation for new commissioners to better understand the role of the PRC and other processes and procedures to feel comfortable in a vote. Chair Powell said there would be an orientation for new commissioners once the Northern Towns vacancy is filled, which is expected to be in early January.

Director's Report

Memorial Stadium Update: Director Garges reported that the BOCC approved moving ahead with Memorial Stadium and asked for the County Manager to come back with options in terms of renovations. Director Garges expressed his recommendation to return to the original concept, keeping the stadium as a Park and Recreation facility capable of hosting many types of events, including minor league soccer with Charlotte Independence and encouraged advocating for doing the right renovations to the stadium.

Commissioner Martin inquired about the seating at the Sportsplex should Independence Soccer eventually switch from the Sportsplex to Memorial Stadium. Director Garges said what we do at the Sportsplex is independent of what Independence Soccer does and would not affect the funding for the additional seating at the Sportsplex.

Eastway Regional Recreation Center: Staff met with the ERRC consultants and it is hopeful that a schematic floor plan for the center can be presented at the next PRC meeting in January.

Northern Regional Recreation Center: Lee Jones, Director of Capital Planning, gave an update on the Northern Regional Recreation Center:

- Following the selection process, Barker Rinker Seacat Architecture and LS3P have been selected as the design team for the Northern Regional Recreation Center (NRRC). The Department will be moving forward with getting the contracts in place. The PRC will be informed as community meetings are scheduled.
- A presentation on the NRRC was made to the Davidson Town Board on October 24, 2017.

PRC Chair Report:

DOT and Utility Impacts: Chair Powell shared that she has received concerns regarding the lack of respect for greenways, wetlands and wildlife habitat by DOT and utility projects and asked how the PRC can be more fierce to say that these properties are important and should be respected.

Director Garges agreed that while many may have easements with the right to do most anything, it doesn't mean they should. Peter Cook, Director of Park Operations, along with the park managers and Nature Preserve and Natural Resources staff, stay in constant communication regarding these projects to do all they can to make sure our property is treated with respect.

Property owners must be notified when a project is coming across, which may be AFM or P&R. The Department is typically informed well in advance of the project and may be able to change the routing to make it better for the park. Often, when the Department has a project, we will work with the various agencies if they also have a project, to coordinate efforts.

Chair Powell said that often re-plantings from a right-of-way or easement project are non-native plants and wondered if it might be best to plant from in-house. Director Garges responded that we usually end up making all the repairs ourselves.

Commissioner Pruess inquired about the policy regarding planting invasive species to be a better advocate for adherence to policy. (**Note:** Here is the County invasive link: <https://www.mecknc.gov/LUESA/WaterandLandResources/Conservation/Pages/ISTF.aspx?redirect=chameck> A guide to identify and control invasive and exotic plants and be viewed [here](#).)

Director Garges said staff would try to make sure PRC were informed of these projects before they begin and suggested that letters to utility companies and others are often helpful.

Respect of Advisory Council/Citizen Input: Chair Powell shared the importance of listening to the concerns of our advisory council members and citizens, say that even if there is a difference of opinion, it is very important to listen with respect and to really hear them as we do not know their life experiences. Chair Powell referenced the evenings public appearance by several of our senior citizens and expressed how important it was to listen to each person's concern individually as opposed to grouping them together by topic.

Commissioner Penn shared her passion and concern for seniors and children and her plans to continue advocating for them and the needs expressed tonight regarding program fees, computers and security.

PRC Recognition of Director Jim Garges: Chair Powell shared with Director Garges that the PRC had purchased a white oak tree and brick to be installed at Double Oaks Community Pool and donations have been made to Greenways for Mecklenburg in his honor. All expressed warm sentiments regarding Jim and his leadership for the Department. He will be greatly missed.

2018 PRC Annual Report to the BOCC: **Motion was made** by Commissioner Engels to request that the PRC be scheduled to make an annual report to the BOCC at the 1st BOCC meeting in November 2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved unanimously. This request will be passed along to the Clerk to the Board, Janice Paige.

Consent Items

Commissioner Martin requested a correction to the minutes of October 10, 2017. Under Park Commissioners Requests and Reports – Commissioner Martin, the minutes stated that Commissioner Martin attended an Eastway Regional Recreation Center steering committee meeting at the Mint Museum. The correct location of the meeting was the Charlotte Museum of History. (**Note:** This correction has been made to the October 10, 2017 PRC minutes)

Motion was made by Commissioner Pruess to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of October 10, 2017, with the above stated correction, which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests

PRC Retreat: The board discussed a 2018 PRC Retreat. It was decided to send a doodle poll for a Saturday in February 2018. (**Note:** The doodle poll was sent and the date of the PRC Retreat will be February 3, 2018 at the Williamson Pavilion at Hornet's Nest Park.)

All Advisory Council Meeting: Commissioner Pruess inquired about another All Advisory Council Meeting, new advisory council t-shirts and inviting advisory council members to attend a future PRC meeting. (**Note:** An All Advisory Council Meeting has been scheduled for February 13, 2018 and will take place at 6 p.m. at the Bette Rae Recreation Center. This meeting will take the place of the February PRC meeting and will be a required meeting.)

Commissioner Penn: Commissioner Penn shared activities and information as follows:

- Visited the Shamrock, Ivory Baker, Bette Rae and the David B. Waymer recreation centers.
- Attended the Panthers event at Bette Rae
- Noted that the BOCC and PRC pictures at the centers were not current
- Suggested future recognition of recreation center employees
- Attended the Senior Citizen conference

Commissioner Engels: Commission Engels shared that the men of HR at Carolinas HealthCare System are interested in a playground build as a 2018 service project.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.